

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1-31 (Canceled)

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): Apparatus for forming a multi-programme transport stream having a fixed overall bit rate and in which the instantaneous allocation of that bit rate amongst the programme transport streams is controllable, comprising a plurality of programme compression units each having a reference input; a controller which generates a transport stream reference having sets of reference packets associated respectively with the respective compression units, in which the relative occurrence of packets of the respective sets reflects the desired instantaneous allocation of that bit rate amongst the programme transport streams, each compression unit receiving the transport stream reference and being arranged to output packets in alignment with the reference packets associated with that compression unit and a multiplexer which combines the outputs of the respective programme compression units to form a multi-programme transport stream.

Claim 33 (Original): Apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein the programme compression unit comprises a compression encoder receiving an uncompressed input.

Claim 34 (Original): Apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein the programme compression unit comprises a compression transcoder receiving a compressed input.